

English publications such as the *Canadian Directory of Parliament, 1867-1967*, or are currently only partially bilingual like the *Canadian Parliamentary Guide*.

As a bilingual register of Canadian federal parliamentarians the *Canadian Parliamentary Handbook* is an important book. However, this first edition lacks the consistency and accuracy to be considered important overall. The organization and presentation of information is excellent. The side by side bilingual format is efficient. The heading approach to each biography is clear and easy to read. But the editorial control is somewhat inconsistent. Information is often incomplete, sometimes out of date or even lacking altogether.

The *Handbook* provides basic biographical data concerning the Governor General, Senators and Members of the House of Commons. All information applies to the current Parliament. In addition to the parliamentary biographies, the register describes the roles and responsibilities of senior officials of the Senate and the House of Commons. In all cases a photograph accompanies the biography of parliamentarians. With one exception there are photographs of each senior official of Parliament. The inclusion of photographs in Parliamentary biography is not new in Canada – both the *Assemblée nationale du Québec*, (1981) and the *Canadian Construction Association's Legislative handbook* include the photographs of elected officials. The *Canadian Parliamentary Handbook*, however also includes photographs of all Senators at the time of its publication.

The presentation of information is its strongest point. Readers used to long strings of unrelated information found in most biographical dictionaries will be pleased to find a workable and efficient alternative in the *Handbook*, which uses bold-face type headings to organize information. These headings include: name of the Member/Senator, date of birth, education, profession, parliamentary service, committee service, marital status, spouse, children. A description of the make-up of the constituency is generally included for elected members. Presumably because constituency offices are officially unique to elected members, the address information is organized differently for Members of the House of Commons and Senators. The *Handbook* provides only parliamentary addresses for Senators; no home addresses are listed. The telephone number listed is the one for the Parliament Hill office. In the case of elected Members, the parliamentary, constituency and home

addresses are listed. Corresponding telephone numbers are provided with the parliamentary and constituency address.

Three elements follow the biography of each Member of the House of Commons: election results for the 1979 and 1980 general elections where the Member ran in both those elections; the population of his electoral district; the geographic and legal description of the district as found in the *Canada Gazette*. Although this information is available elsewhere, it appears to be a handy compendium for the student wishing to quickly check various election results, or the constituent wanting to know the boundaries of a particular electoral district.

The basic problem with collecting information from other sources is to ensure that it is timely. It is unfortunate that the population counts in the *Handbook* are based on the 1976 Census and not the Census for 1981. For example, Terrebonne is listed at 103,213 persons while the 1981 count is 136,651; Beaches is listed at 80,008 while the 1981 count is 73,174.

While the text of the biographies is clear it is sometimes uneven and inconsistent. The descriptions of the individual electoral districts vary from ten lines with complete linguistic, ethnic and industrial descriptions, to one uninformative line, and in 19 of the first 114 cases examined, no constituency information at all! Of the ninety Senators listed in this book, only twenty-six biographies list year, month and day of birth. There is no list of abbreviations and the use of abbreviations is inconsistent i.e.; Qué. and P.Q., for Québec. Dates are sometimes written out in full, sometimes in numerical characters only. Under the heading Committee service, the *Handbook* does not always distinguish between special, standing, and joint committees. Under the heading of ministerial appointments, the exact day and month of the appointment is not always provided. The same is true of the appointments of parliamentary secretaries. This lack of consistency and accuracy can be frustrating – especially if the user relies solely on it to verify facts or to obtain greater biographical detail on a particular Senator or Member of the House of Commons. It is hoped that the text will be revised with a view to issue timely, accurate and constant information in future editions.

For a 500 page book limited to the Federal scene, the introductory article on the Canadian parliamentary process is too short and too simplified. By contrast, the articles on the Governor General and the various administrative structures of Parlia-

ment are taken directly from the book *Organization of the Government of Canada, 1980*, and add no new information. The editor would have done well to incorporate parts from the 1982 edition of *How Canadians govern themselves*. The fact that little comment is made on recent constitutional developments is disappointing, especially given the book's article, the "Commemorative edition of the Constitutional Parliament of 1982".

A book like this needs an index – and none is provided. If the editor continues with this format, a less expensive edition is recommended – the heading approach lends itself to a loose-leaf format more readily updated. The lists of telephone number of the various services of the Senate and House are not of much use and certainly subject to the vagaries of continual change.

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### **WEDNESDAYS ARE CABINET DAYS by Russell Doern, Queenston House, Winnipeg, 1981, 206 p.**

Books written by practicing politicians provide difficult subjects for review. Several sorts of questions arise. Should we judge such books by the standards normally applied to more academic writing, or should we look perhaps for first-rate journalism? Can such books tell us things about the political process which we are unlikely to learn from other sources? Are most performers in politics poor observers of the process? Do they focus on the superficial and more sensational events, while ignoring the wider context and more routine dimensions of political life? The process of government does not take place in one location and at one point in time and a given individual cannot arrange to be present for all significant events. Should insider accounts be questioned for this reason? Is the political process overlaid with myths to which the participants themselves subscribe and are such myths reflected in their writings? Is there a tendency to over-personalize events and to exaggerate one's own contribution to the outcomes? One recalls the response of a backbench MP to his wife's question: – What do you do all day in that place? "I legislate, that's what I do," he replied. The story reveals the gap which often arises between what people say they do and what is actually the case.

My own view is that books by politicians, if well done, can provide valuable

insights into the political process. Certainly there is no reason to assume that social scientists – who usually base their analyses upon interviews with a sample of legislators over a short period of time – are necessarily better able to portray the legislative process accurately and comprehensively than individuals who have participated directly over a number of years. Still, there are problems of the sort alluded to above with relying upon the accounts of participants to obtain our understanding of the legislative process. Unfortunately, many of these problems are illustrated by the book under review here.

Mr. Russell Doern is currently serving his fifth term as a New Democratic Party Member of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. For seven years (1971-1977) he was the Minister of Public Works in the government of then Premier, now Governor General, Edward Schreyer. Mr. Doern is a university graduate, with training in history and political science, a former teacher, and a free-lance writer. From a person of his background and experience one might expect a book with some serious and worthwhile insights into the governing process in the province of Manitoba. On this level, the book is disappointing. In fairness to Mr. Doern, he states at the outset that this is "a personal account" of the Schreyer administration and is neither history nor political science.

Most of the book consists of portraits of the more colourful personalities who performed on the political stage during the Schreyer years. These descriptions are entertaining and often amusing. However, they deal almost entirely with surface features and do not add dimensions to public personalities beyond available media accounts. We are told about the cabinet's passion for Chinese food, about their individual taste in office furnishings, and their personal life-styles. Apparently one of Mr. Doern's criteria for ranking cabinet members is the quality of their wardrobes and he regards himself as a trend-setter in this field. He quotes from a *Chatelaine* interview with Mrs. Lily Schreyer, who played a major role in selecting the Premier's wardrobe, that she watched to see what Doern was wearing for each new fashion season.

The portrait of the "Boy from Beausejour" who became Premier is a familiar one. Edward Schreyer is seen as a pragmatic, cautious, frugal, hard-working, unpretentious, accessible, and relatively humourless individual who was often ponderous and academic in his public speeches. Doern does not resolve what is for many Manitobans the enigma of Edward

Schreyer: how a man who could hardly be described as charismatic acquired such a strong popular following as to arouse charges of a cult of personality being created. Apart from the Premier's rural upbringing, his university education which impressed urban middle-class voters, his ethnic background and multilingual capacity, and his grasp of the underlying moderate conservatism of the Manitoba electorate, what was the mysterious "Schreyer factor" to which Doern refers? Unfortunately, he does not tell us why Schreyer was consistently ahead of his party in the polls, even in 1977 when the NDP government was out of steam and lost power.

The description of Schreyer as leader of the government appears somewhat contradictory. Doern begins by saying there "is nothing democratic about cabinet government" and that the Premier is "like a medieval monarch or feudal king". Yet the implication of one-man rule is not supported by many of the examples presented in the book. For example, Doern criticizes Schreyer for not consulting caucus, except for a few senior members, on cabinet selections. However, such appointments are clearly the prerogative of the Premier and I know of no jurisdiction where a canvass of caucus opinion precedes such appointments. Doern correctly observes that Schreyer refused to dismiss ministers and senior officials who had stagnated in their jobs or become liabilities for other reasons. This tendency apparently reflected Schreyer's dislike of personal conflicts, but it hardly suggests decisive and domineering leadership.

Mr. Doern does communicate fairly successfully a feel for the interaction of personalities within a cabinet, caucus and a party. Descriptions of cabinet meetings suggest a free-wheeling atmosphere, with the Premier providing direction and searching for a consensus. Rather simplistically, the cabinet members are divided into three groups: Schreyer loyalists, mavericks and loyalists in maverick disguises. Doern criticizes Schreyer for showing insufficient gratitude toward his steadfast supporters (Doern includes himself in this group), while mistakenly rewarding the mavericks. Doern's advice to the wise leader is to take the maverick for granted while recognizing faithful followers on the principle that "the main machinery will get the grease, while the squeaky wheels wears itself out". Such simple aphorisms, and there are many in this book, ignore the complications and ambiguities of political leadership and public life.

Mr. Doern admits to boredom and frustration in the role of backbencher and describes his campaign to be included in the cabinet. Eventually he is rewarded with the Department of Public Works, one of the less glamorous portfolios. Despite having responsibility for few legislative initiatives, Doern managed to receive a great deal of media attention, most of it obtained because he was so politically accident-prone. He relates his side of the more newsworthy episodes: the building of a comfort station on city land without permission (the battle of the biffy), the construction of a provincial government building which exceeded the legal height limit (the law was changed) and the calling of a press conference for the removal of the sign from the Liberal caucus door when they got too small to rate an office. There is very limited discussion of the legislative record of the Schreyer government and yet ten pages are devoted to the fiasco surrounding the proposed visit to Manitoba by former Beatle, John Lennon, and his wife Yoko Ono, an event in which Mr. Doern also figured prominently.

Despite his checkered record as a minister, Mr. Doern has not written a modest book. At times it is vain and self-serving. His cabinet colleagues regarded his arrival in their ranks "as a Godsend", his attacks on opponents are described as stinging, and "devastating", he is in "top-fighting" form in opposition, and his booth at the party leadership convention, held in November 1979 to replace Edward Schreyer, was "the most professional". Despite his talents, Mr. Doern ran a poor third and the delegates chose Howard Pawley, who led the party to victory in the 1981 election. Doern's book was released after the NDP victory but before Premier Pawley named his cabinet. He includes himself in a list of "professional" cabinet ministers from which Pawley can select his new team, but when the announcement came, Mr. Doern was in fact not included. The book ends melodramatically with the suggestion that the Doern family motto should be "Perduramus – We endure".

The reader does not have to endure this book for, unlike some more academic tomes, it is a light-and-easy read. It provides an entertaining snapshot of Manitoba political figures, but it also represents a missed opportunity in terms of a more serious examination of the internal workings of a provincial government and such studies are badly needed.

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